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60"

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58"

56"

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**50**"

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44" 43"

41" 40"

39" 38"

37"

36"

31"

30"

29"

28'

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## Mystery in a Trunk

By Sophie Braccini



Carole Sinclair and the steamer trunk that held a mystery.

Photos Sophie Braccini

trunk. A mystery, but this one's not found in a movie or romantic novel.

Carole Sinclair had never seen anything so touching among the col-A pair of spectacles still lies in the these people." case; one of the lenses is loose. The letter is written on frighteningly thin, calls, it only took Sinclair about three yellow paper, and when Sinclair weeks to identify the writer, his famopens it up it looks like it could turn to dust.

The letter is addressed to "Jane." The main text is typed, with the matic fiancée has not been found. slightly awkward looking block capitals that typewriters imprinted. man Casper Halbach Jr. When Sin-

love letter sent before World Handwritten lines have been added War II, hidden in a steamer at the bottom, as if someone was keeping notes on his or her own life. "I started to obsess with this letter," Farmyard Darlings co-owner recounts Sinclair, "the letter talks about love and trust, and was dated 1937. One of the handwritten notes lectibles she and partner Kim Berry reads, 'I became engaged to you and purchase for their shop. Behind a I hope and pray that we will be very compartment in an old trunk were happy'-it was dated April 17, 1938. wedged a spectacle case and a letter. I had to find out what happened to

> With a few clicks and phones ily and his wife. But the veil has not been completely lifted – the writer's wife was not named Jane; the enig-

The letter was written by Her-

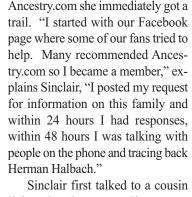
clair entered the name Ancestry.com she immediately got a

living in Germany. She corresponded with a grand-nephew and a grand-niece who lives in Tracy and was born in Hayward. They all knew about Halbach and were very interested in the discovery. It turned out that Halbach was originally from Oakland. He was in WWII, survived, and was stationed in Germany for a few years; one of his granddaughters lives there.

Halbach died in 2009. His wife, Loraine, lives in Yuba City.

"Since the letter is not addressed to Loraine, I decided not to try to reach her," says Sinclair, "but his daughter, who lives locally, is coming and we will give everything to her."

Sinclair hopes to find out more about the mysterious Jane to whom the letter was addressed. For now, the steamer trunk is still in Sinclair and Berry's store, in the back of Mt. Diablo Nursery & Garden in Lafayette.



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## **Scouts Take History Walk**

Submitted by Kana Ryan

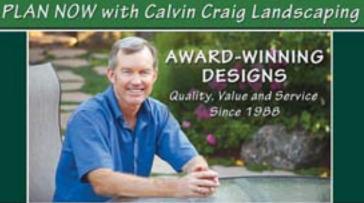


Photo provided

site of the old railroad tracks, on to the Moraga days.

he Wolf Scouts of Pack 505 recently went on Barn, and finally to the Ranch House Café where a Moraga History Walk. The Scouts started the boys tasted local produce including walnuts, at Willow Springs Church, the site of the 2nd pears and apples. Throughout the walk the Scouts school house in Moraga. They then walked by the learned about Moraga history and life in the olden





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